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ABSTRACT

This book posits that "plain talk" is needed on the subject of evaluation in vocational education and training. In the first chapter, conceptual issues are discussed. Chapter 2 focuses on the reasons for, and methods of, evaluation. Chapter 3 presents and assesses the value of a broad range of evaluation techniques, including outcome measures, program effects, comparison, aggregation, cost-benefit analysis, and evaluation of program implementation. Chapters 4-7 consider the use and abuse of evaluation results in policymaking, particularly in relation to recent trends and issues in vocational education and training around the world, such as decentralization, a declining role for the state, a shift towards work-based learning, and a concern for issues of equality. Nine recommendations are made, including the following: (1) evaluation of vocational education and training (VET) programs should never lose sight of labor market outcomes but should also be concerned with the processes leading to these results; (2) a variety of evaluation methods should be used together; (3) evaluations should consider long-term as well as short-term effects; (4) equity as well as efficiency should be considered; (5) privatization of training should be approached with caution; and (6) the influence of political factors should be considered. (Contains 409 references.) (KC)

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